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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A computerized method of automatically obtaining and distributing data from one or more IMDs deployed in one or more patients, comprising the steps of:

transmitting via a network communication link IMD installation and management data pertaining to at least one of the IMDs to a programmer communicating with a central computer system external to any patient;

routing the IMD data to the central computer system; and

routing the IMD data to one or more peripheral computer systems.

2.   The computerized method of claim 1, wherein the IMD-accessible data comprises physiologic data from the patient.

3.   The computerized method of claim 1, wherein the IMD-accessible data comprises device information.

4.   The computerized method of claim 3, wherein the device information comprises at least one of device model number, serial number, hardware, firmware, or software identification patient name, patient contact information, clinician name, and clinician entity.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the network communication link comprises a radio frequency link.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the network communication link comprises a hybrid link.

7.   The method of claim 6 wherein the hybrid link comprises a radio frequency link from an IMD to a network interface, and a secondary network link from the network interface to the computer.

8.   The computerized method of claim 1, wherein the one or more peripheral computer comprise at least one of a supplier computer, a business system computer, an accounts payable computer, an accounts receivable computer, a clinician computer, or a third party payor computer.

9.   The computerized method of claim 1 further comprising the step of generating from at least one peripheral computer at least one invoice pertaining to a least one IMD, the invoice being derived at least in part from IMD data.

10.   The method of claim 7 wherein the secondary network link is a direct dial up connection.

11.   The method of claim 7 wherein the secondary network link is an area network.

12.   The method of claim 7, wherein the secondary network communication link comprises an asynchronous link.

13.   The method of claim 7, wherein the secondary network communications link comprises a synchronous link.

14.   The method of claim 11 wherein the area network is a LAN.

15.   The method of claim 11 wherein the area network is a WAN.

16.   The system of claim 1, wherein the one or more IMDs comprises one or more of a pacemaker, a PCD pacemaker/cardioverter/defibrillator, an oxygen sensing device, a nerve stimulator, a muscle stimulator, a drug pump, or an implantable monitoring device.

17. The computerized method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing the data in storage means accessible to the central computer system.

18. A computerized information network system linking one or more IMD programmers to a centralized computer system via a data communication network, said network comprising:

a first computer accessible by the network, said central computer capable of storing data regarding an IMD;

at least one network interface to at least one programmer, said network interface being capable of communication with the network;

at least one additional peripheral computer in data communication with the first computer.

19. The computerized network of claim 18, wherein the network comprises a direct link between the at least one network interface and the computer.

20. The computerized network of claim 18, wherein the first computer comprises a supercomputer.

21. The computerized network of claim 18, wherein the first computer comprises a multi-processor workstation.

22. The computerized network of claim 18, wherein the first computer comprises a networked or parallel cluster of computers.

23. The computerized network of claim 18, wherein the data communication is asynchronous.

24. The computerized network of claim 18, where the data communication is synchronous.

25.   The computerized network of claim 18, where the central computer is adapted to generate and transmit electronically an invoice pertaining to an IMD programmer event.

26.   The computerized network of claim 18, where at least one additional peripheral computer may generate an invoice.